The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

Entered as second-class matter September 21, 1915, at the postoffice at Washington, D. C., under the act of August 24, 1912.

AGITATE!
EDUCATE!
ORGANIZE!

VOL. 5, NO. 49. WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 1916. WHOLE NO. 257.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MEANS MORE THAN GUNS

—PRESIDENT GOMPERS.

New York, March 4.—The Washington correspondent of the New York Tribune quotes President Gompers as opposing any plan to restrict the appropriation militia unless there is included a provision against its further use in the suppression of strikes, where the declaration by the A. F. of L. executive is that "the burden of costs for the military armament should be distributed equally among all classes, instead of resting most heavily on the wage earners and consumers, as heretofore."

The fact that we have chosen to call our system of government in the United States a republic," Mr. Gompers said, does not insure either protection or peace. Preparedness is an economic as well as a civic and military problem. The principles of human welfare cannot be ignored in plans for national defense any more than they can be ignored in the industry of commerce. The safeguarding of human rights and freedom are of fundamental importance, and are correlated with national defense. They must not be sacrificed to any false conception of national defense.

"To what end will a nation be saved if the citizens are denied the rights that gives life value and purpose? The preparedness favored by labor is democratic preparedness. There must be no sham, no pretense, no halfway measures. There must be industrial preparedness, political, social, moral as well as military defense. Citizen soldiery must be established and extended. It must be democratically organized, officered and controlled. We must put an end to the present wasteful and unfair administration of our military affairs.

"To say that we will leave the administration of such powers in the hands of the privileged few is to surrender in advance. It can be safe only in the hands of the democracy of America. Wherever the spirit of democracy is absent there is the accompanying evil of militarism fastens its deadly clutches upon freedom and civic opportunity just as certainly as where the spirit of democracy obtains it is to the abolition of military castes and the vindication of human rights.

"Preparedness, democratic preparedness must be made against enemies at home as well as enemies that may occur beyond our borders. It must take in many factors and should be such as will not bear the bulk of the burden—the cost of war at home and the sacrifice of war at the front."

WAGES OF WOMEN ARE LOW.

Washington, March 4.—In bulletin No. 15, issued by the bureau of labor statistics, department of labor, it is shown that in practically all industries a large proportion of the women wage earners were found to be such that many cases were inadequate to supply a reasonable standard of living. In the cotton, glass, silk and woolen textile industries, these industries about two-thirds of the women workers 16 years of age and over received less than $8 a week. In the cotton industry week, in another group of 23 industries, more than 20,000 women 16 years of age and over 61 per cent receive less than $8 in a representative week.

In the industries of the 5,000 families investigated, from 52 to 58 per cent had girls 16 years of age and over at work. That this employment was due to the economic necessity is indicated by the fact that from 37 to 47 per cent of the total family income was contributed by girls in this age group and that approximately two-fifths of the girls' earnings were contributed to the family.

The report shows that the employment of children was both extensive and serious, although it is declared "that a public sentiment against their exploitation is making itself felt effectively."

FAVORS RESTRICTION.

Washington, March 4.—Alexander P. Moore, owner of the Pittsburgh Leader, who was in the city last week, is quoted as follows by a local newspaper on the question of immigration:

"We must close for five years a nation of selfishness that we may guard ourselves against the cheap labor of Europe. Not only in this must we protect ourselves, but we must restrict our immigration. We cannot open up a sign on Ellis island so high and so luminous that all nations could read it: 'Standing room only.' We must be a rush when the fighting is over in Europe—a rush for America, and then we shall have to become a race of hermits. We shall have to keep 'em out. We wouldn't take into our homes anyone who have the measles, and we can't afford to take a chance with those of the stricken areas of Europe, much as we may sympathize with them."

MANY WORKERS HURT.

Harrisburg, Pa., March 4.—Injuries more than 13,000 workers in Pennsylvania industrial plants during the first 16 days of February, an average of almost 1,000 every working day. The several times during that period more than 1,000 were injured in a single day. The highest daily record of injuries was 1,190. During the first 16 days of February 92 workers were killed.

This number does not include 27 fatalities in one mine catastrophe in western Pennsylvania, and several other fatalities. Accident reports, received at the bureau of statistics during February, show a marked increase over January. During the month of January 12,465 workers were injured, including 129 killed.

R. R. TELEGRAPHERS GAIN

St. Louis, Mo., March 4.—President Parham of the Order of Railway Telegraphers reports that this organization has secured revised schedules and wage scales on the following railroads: Quebec, Montreal & Southern; Chesapeake & Ohio, Hocking Valley, Erie, Ann Arbor and Detroit, Toledo & Ironton. New wage schedules have been secured on the Kentucky, Omaha & Kansas City and the Toledo, St. Louis & Western. The latter settlement was secured with aid of the United States board of mediation.

STREET CAR MEN ORGANIZE.

San Antonio, Tex., March 4.—Street car men in this city have organized. The management of the San Antonio Traction company assured Vice President Ben Commons of the Amalgamated Street Car Men's union that it did not oppose organization of its employes. The trade union official says this is one of the first instances of its kind in the history of their international union.

WAGE INCREASES FOR TUGMEN.

Toledo, Ohio, March 4.—Wages of organized tugmen employed by the Great Lakes Towing company have been increased $5 a month. An increase of $2.25 a month in the winter schedule has also been secured.

RESTRICTION OPPOSED AND REASONS THEREOF

Washington, March 4.—Opponents of the Burnett immigration restriction bill continue to ignore the position of organized labor on this question—that the steel trust and other employers of cheap labor can only maintain present working conditions through the illiteracy of employes.

Those opponents express great fear that if "common labor" is checked American industry will suffer. This point has been brought out several times by Senator Cochran, ex-congressman and New York lawyer, in his opposition to immigration restriction.

Organized labor replies that no so-called "common laborer" has invaded American ideals on wages paid by large corporations, and that the remedy is ability to read in some language, followed by unionization.

Another line of Mr. Cochran's reasoning is as follows: "The dangerous man is the one who can plan a forgery or counterfeit under serious offense against our laws, and that man can pass any literacy test that you can impose."

A. F. of L. Secretary Frank Morrison answered this statement when he told the house committee on immigration that where an individual breaks the laws of the land he can be punished, but an individual or a corporation is permitted to lower living standards and change the entire nation with impunity.

The restrictionists of the Burnett bill opponents is that this legislation will change America's historic attitude toward "common laborer" this mankind. That it will act as a barrier against those who would flee from persecution because of political or religious ideals.

The bill clearly and specifically exempts from the literacy test all political and religious refugees.

WOULD ABOLISH 7-HOUR DAY

Washington, March 4.—Congressman Borland has introduced a "rider" to the legislative, executive and judiciary appropriation bill which provides that government employes in Washington shall work not less than eight hours per day." The amendment affects about 30,000 clerks who are employed seven hours a day. Mr. Borland insists that men in the mechanical departments of the government are working eight hours and that his purpose is to equalize the workday. The executive council of the American Federation of Labor in session last week, instructed President Gompers to protest against the legislation. Practically every business concern and business organization has also protested, as has every Washington labor union. The latter influences insist that an extra hour's labor for 30,000 employees would completely change business and social life in this city. In one of his letters to Congressman Borland President Gompers says:

"You say that your purpose in proposing your amendment is to equalize the hours of labor of all government employes. If that is your purpose it can be accomplished equally as well without the hours of labor of all other employes to the hours worked in Washington, thus invalidating the accomplishments of labor out any backward step and without acting in violation of principles of human welfare.

One local newspaper has acknowledged the inner significance in addition to the amendment is organized labor.

LOW WAGES OVERLOOKED.

New York, March 4.—The Russell Sage Foundation has issued the results of a survey of Springfield, Ill., charities. It is shown that as many as 1,764 families received some form of charitable aid in 1912, the year studied.

In a press review, the Foundation says:

"The chief cause of dependency of families dependent or abnormal were found to be tuberculosis, sickness other than tuberculosis, widowhood, irregular employment, desertion and intemperance. Unemployment, non-support, mental deficiency, crippled condition and blindness were also factors of importance in producing abnormal conditions.

No reference to the evils of low wages is made in the press review, which is published editor with this significant statement by E. G. Routzahn of the Foundation:

"The following is submitted in the hope that, if acceptable, it may prove a helpful contribution to the securing more general appreciation of the spirit and purpose of modern organized charity."

BENEFIT OF BARBERS' UNION.

San Antonio, Tex., March 4.—Writing in the Weekly Dispatch, J. D. Ashley shows gains made through trade unionism by barbers in this city in 25 years. In 1890 the shops opened at 6 and 7 in the morning and closed at 9 and 9 in the evening. Today they are closed and open on Sundays. They have reduced these hours, raised wages and abolished Sunday work. In addition they have a death benefit of $500 and a weekly sick benefit of $18. On an average of $1 a week, the total cost for this during the 15 years has been $192.

NEW YORK TEACHERS TO UNITE.

New York, March 4.—Public school teachers in this city are organizing a federation and affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. President Henry Linville has issued a call to all teachers and principals who favor this movement. Sentiment for unionization has increased because of the reduction of salaries and uncertainty of positions following the efforts of local politicians to control the public school by securing the passage of a "home rule" law by the state legislature.

HOW UNIONS ARE "DESTROYED."

Duluth, Minn., March 4.—Several years ago the master plumbers locked out their employes, members of the Plumbers' union. At that time the bosses declared for nonunionism, which they called the "open" shop. It was declared that only the Plumbers' union would never again be recognized.

That was in 1907. At the present time the union and a new organization of master plumbers are negotiating a union shop agreement.

AGAINST SCHOOL-BOY LABOR.

Charleston, W. Va., March 4.—Superintendent of Public Schools Laidley favors the state law which will permit children of poor parents to spend one-half of each school day as wage earners.

Trade unionists support the plan, and declare it means a backward step. The Central Labor Union has appointed a committee to devise methods to oppose the school man's theory.

TROLLEY MEN WANT MORE.

Scranton, Pa., March 4.—The Street Car Men's union has produced a new wage scale, to take effect the first of next month. Higher rates are asked, as are better working conditions, shorter hours and the employment of none but members of the union.

A. F. OF L. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MAKES MANY IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Washington, March 4.—At the quarterly meeting of the American Federation of Labor executive council, held in this city last week, the following were among the more important decisions agreed to:

Indorsement of the Oregon working day and load monopoly and land speculation in that state. This act was initiated by the Central Labor Council of Portland, Oregon, as a result of a study of the unemployment evil.

The executive council will urge the enactment of a graduated income tax on the principle for which it has declared and emphasized by the American Federation of Labor, this tax to be so graduated that wealth and its accumulations shall contribute a larger proportionate share than now.

Under authority of the San Francisco convention the executive council will, in the very near future, send a communication to the central organized labor movements of the various European countries regarding the holding of a world's labor congress at the same time and place when the various governments shall meet to determine upon the terms of peace between the various warring nations.

A special effort will be made to organize the migratory workers throughout the country. Central bodies will be called upon to assist.

Under authority of the San Francisco convention an assessment of 1 cent per capita will be levied in the very near future for the purpose of extending the campaign of organizing women wage earners.

The executive council protested against the proposed bill for increasing the hours of work for government employes in Washington.

President Gompers was authorized to carry out the instructions of the San Francisco convention regarding the enforcement of the federal eight-hour law. Department officials will be urged to have their respective subordinates insist that the law be observed by contractors.

The following resolution was adopted:

"That the executive council of the American Federation of Labor declares that it will carry into effect the resolution adopted by the San Francisco convention of the American Federation of Labor which deplores the injustice and discrimination inflicted upon the Jewish people, and we urge upon the responsible representatives of the government of the United States that they use their good offices in securing the consent of the governments in which discrimination, persecution and injustice have been practiced against any people on account of their religious belief, to the discontinuance of this persecution, which is at variance with the principles of justice and humanity."

The executive council indorsed the position of the organized labor movement of Porto Rico that the congress of the United States ought to have made a federal investigation of economic and social conditions on the island before talking any steps to formulate a new organic act for the government of the people of Porto Rico. It was agreed that steps be taken to urge upon congress the wisdom of the demands of the people of Porto Rico, as no government for the island can be effective that is not based upon a correct understanding of social and economic conditions and does not take into consideration those needs of Porto Ricans.

It was reported that the committee appointed to investigate unemployment and vagrancy laws, under authority of the San Francisco convention, is making progress. The executive council expects to make a complete report on this question at the next convention.

The executive council designated July 4 next as the day for the dedication of the new American Federation of Labor office building.

CAN'T DEFINE "UNSKILLED"

Boston, March 4.—"What workers are unskilled?" asks Superintendent Dunderdale of the Boston public schools. In the free employment office in his annual report. The official shows that the man or boy who drives a team through a crowded street must have both nerve and skill and that even a janitor must be skilled in his line before he is employed.

Superintendent Dunderdale makes the following statement as to the use of the term "unskilled worker" in the prevailing loose manner:

"A very difficult question which arises in this department, in as to the line of demarcation between skilled and unskilled labor. Often the calling of a cook is listed as unskilled. It is generally considered that it does not take much skill to fry an egg or a steak, but the title of cook embraces a chef in hotels, clubs or restaurants, and the meal concerns which places save to be filled with persons of exceptional skill. Again, the vocation of a marketer may mean only one or boy can drive a grocery wagon, but it requires a man or boy of skill to sell little skill to run a lawn mower or look after a small garden, or to assist in a greenhouse, but a gardener who can escape gardener or a man to take charge of a hot house, then it requires a man of exceptional ability and skill. All the trades are listed as unskilled, and in looking over the records of the employment department who have secured positions, it is misleading to assume they are only laborers or unskilled men. In many instances, and nearly all of them, I might say, these men are skilled in their line of work. It is a very unfair thing illicit thing to get employers to engage a man to do window cleaning, taking up and beating carpets, or as kitchenman, dishwasher, or janitor, who has not had some previous experience."

SHINGLE WEAVERS ACTIVE

Seattle, Wash., March 4.—Secretary-Treasurer Reid of the International Shingle Weavers' union reports a general awakening of that craft in the Pacific northwest mills at Raymond, Wash., operated by the Case Shingle company have received an increase in rate, after every shingle worker joined the union. In practically every shingle center these workers are recognizing or strengthening their present organization. Secretary Reid warns his fellow unionists to be ware of the organized mill owners in an effort to check the present movement.

HIGHER WAGES FOR WIRE MEN.

Billings, Mont., March 4.—Electrical Workers' union No. 453 has presented a new wage scale to employers which calls for an increase of 25 cents a day. This will make the rate $5 for an eight-hour day.

TEXTILE WORKERS GAIN.

Knoxville, Tenn., March 4.—The Brookside mills and the United Textile Workers' union have settled their differences through conferences. Wages of 1,000 workers will be increased. The mills are among the largest in the south.

HATTERS' RELIEF FUND.

Washington, March 4.—Up to and including Wednesday, March 1, A. F. of L. Secretary Frank Morrison has received $81,578.12 for the benefit of the striking hatters. This money represents the pay of one hour's labor on January 27 by the unionists contributing.

POST OFFICE EMPLOYES' LEGISLATION APPROVED

Washington, March 4.—The house has passed the postal appropriation bill. It contains a number of important remedial measures for employes which are supported by the post office clerks affiliated to the American Federation of Labor.

The bill provides for the restoration of the salaries of the letter carriers reduced from $1,200 to $1,000 because they collected mail. This sustains the position of President Gompers who protested to the postmaster general when these cuts in salaries were made a year ago.

The compensation for injury act is intended to apply to all civil service employes in the postal service and to postoffice employes. This affects thousands of workers heretofore unprotected against injuries received in the performance of duty.

Postoffice laborers' wages have been raised from $720 to a uniform rate of $840 a year. This admits of wage increases for 900 men.

The bill also provides that hereafter holiday service performed by clerks and letter carriers shall be rebated by granting the workers compensatory time with 30 days.

The efforts of the National Federation of Post Office Clerks and the American Federation of Labor are now directed toward getting the employes' features of this bill safely through the senate.

LOW DEATH RATE IN MINES.

Washington, March 4.—Of the 750,000 men employed in coal mining last year, 2,453 were killed, the lowest rate known in the past 16 years, according to bureau of mines figures, just made public. The number of men killed is actually the lowest in the last eight years, despite the increasing number of men employed. The number of tons of coal produced for each miner killed is the largest in the history of the coal mining industry in this country.

TO REGULATE CHILD LABOR.

Baltimore, March 4.—Trade unionists are urging amendments to the state factory law which will reduce the minimum age limit of newsboys employed on route delivery from 16 to 14 years, another restricts labor by children under 14 years to eight hours a day, and a third prohibits night work by children.

LOW WAGES FOR SOAP WORKERS

St. Louis, Mo., March 4.—Employes of the nonunion N. K. Fairbank company's plant in this city struck to enforce wage increases of 1-2 cents an hour. The present rate is 15 cents.

"CHEAP LIVING" CRY OPPOSED BY EDITOR

Billings, Mont., March 4.—Editor Buck of the Yellowstone Labor News believes workers should pay more attention to higher wages and less to the many "cheap living" movements abroad in the land. He says:

"About every so often we read about some one who has solved the problem of 'cheap living' and every capitalist paper in the country gives the 'cheap living' fanatic oodles of space in which to set forth, in much detail, his recipe for cheap living.

"There is an object in this 'cheap living' agitation.

"The cheaper the workers can be induced to live the cheaper they will be compelled to work.

"The wages of the workers are, as a general rule, regulated by the cost of what is actually necessary to furnish the three things necessary to life, i. e., food, clothing and shelter. If the worker will consent to get along with less food, less clothing and less shelter, thus making it possible for him to live on less wages, he will soon find that the employers have taken advantage of his consent to the lower standard and they will compel him to also accept a lower wage.

"The only exception to this rule is in the case of the organized workers. Through their collective strength they are able to demand a higher wage and as a consequence enjoy a better standard of living.

"The workers should disregard entirely all attempts to foist on them the 'cheap living' idea and devote their attention to the question of how to solve the problem, not of how to live cheap but how to live well."

MODEL HOMES PLANNED.

Pittsburgh, Pa., March 4.—The housing committee of the chamber of commerce of this city has begun its work. It is not in hovels and return from their work to crawl into bed immediately after another day's toil, but the purpose of the committee declares that "investigations" will not end with the condemnation of tenements—cheap homes must be provided for these so-called "hard-bone" laborers.

The committee has worked out a plan for housing about 60 families and believes that this plan should be accepted by those people, who, it is stated, "have been in the habit of crying for better homes for the poor in a merely sentimental way, exploiting the needs and miseries of working people."

"Now let these people get busy or shut up about housing conditions. We have given them something concrete—as a practical demonstration," the committee continues.

It appears that the venture is perfectly "practical," the committee reports that the investment will yield a profit of from $14 to $16 a month and will yield a profit of 7 per cent to the owner.

IMMIGRATION FIGURES.

Washington, March 4.—The bureau of immigration, United States department of labor, reports that 21,598 immigrants arrived during January. The figures show the effect of war on immigration from the Balkan states. In January 1914 the immigration from Bulgaria, Servia and Montenegro totaled only 1,000, the number from Bulgaria, Servia and Montenegro totaled 554.

During the year 1914, Italy furnished the largest number of immigrants, 1,958; Greece was next with 1,290. The number of laborers was 1,000; skilled, 1,000; laborers, 1,722; farmers, 670. The states receiving the greatest number of these immigrants are: New York, 4,557; Michigan, 2,603; Massachusetts, 1,529; California, 1,084, and Pennsylvania, 1,060.

BAD EGGS ARE BARRED.

Washington, March 4.—While the defenders of child labor are insisting that the child labor bill now before congress is unconstitutional because it is an interference with interstate commerce, the secretary of agriculture has ruled that hereafter eggs not 95 per cent good will be barred from interstate commerce.

Under the Keating-Owen bill, products of child labor under certain ages would be treated as bad eggs will be.

TEAMSTERS ORGANIZE.

Holyoke, Mass., March 4.—Teamsters in this city have organized a union and affiliated to the Brotherhood of Teamsters. A wage scale has been submitted to employers, which provides for $15 per week for single drivers; $14.50 for double drivers; $15.50 for three-hore teams, and $16 and $17 for four-horse teams. Nine hours shall constitute a day's work with Saturday afternoon off without wage reduction during the months of June, July and August.

AWNING WORKERS GAIN.

St. Louis, Mo., March 4.—The new agreement of the Awning Workers' union, signed by the National Tent and Awning Manufacturers' association of this city, took effect the first of the month. Working conditions are bettered and provision is made for a renewal of the contract.

RAILROAD RAISES WAGES.

Jackson, Mich., March 4.—The Detroit, Toledo & Ironton railroad announces wage increases for shop employes. Machinists are advanced from 34 to 36 cents and boiler makers from 35 to 36 1-2 cents.

OFFICE EMPLOYES UNITE.

Cincinnati, March 4.—A committee of the Central Labor Council is assisting bookkeepers, stenographers, bookkeepers and other office employes to form a union chartered by the American Federation of Labor.

HIGHER WAGES FOR PAINTERS.

Canton, Ohio, March 4.—Painters' union No. 296 has presented a new wage scale to employers. A 48 cent rate is asked for from April 1, 1916, to April 1, 1917, and 52 cents for the following year.

STREET CAR MEN WIN STRIKE.

Springfield, Mo., March 4.—The Springfield Traction company has agreed, after a short strike, to recognize the newly formed Street Car Men's union. All strikers return to their former positions.

MOLDERS RAISE WAGES.

Canton, Ohio, March 4.—Iron Molders' union No. 52 has secured a minimum rate of 34 a day to take effect the first of next month. This rate was secured through conferences with employers.

FOUR MEN CONTROL ANTI-UNION SCHEME

Washington, March 4.—Four men control the National Council for Industrial Defense, said Senator Kenyon in his speech favoring the Keating-Owen child labor bill.

The council is an off-shoot of the National Association of Manufacturers, and its attorney, James Emery, recently appeared before the senate committee in opposition to the bill. Senator Kenyon made extensive reference to the congressional investigation that resulted in an expose of legislative methods of the discredited National Association of Manufacturers.

"Which," Senator Kenyon declared, "has a good deal of sense to come into the committee rooms of congress and fight legislation, in view of past legislative history."

"The lobbyist investigation conducted by congress, clearly showed," continued the senator, "that the three men who were engaged in managing and directing the work were Mr. Redwedman, Col. Mulhall, and Mr. Emery, and that Mr. Kirby gave his acquiescence to many things. Whether he knew the details or not may be said to be a question. But regardless, after reading this evidence, was that the National Council for Industrial Defense was the four men and that was all that the members were composed for the most part from good institutions that had been formed for good ends, in the belief that they were simply to be kept informed of certain legislative proceedings.

"The method employed by these four gentlemen was to send out printed information to all the members and ask them to bombard congress with letters and telegrams of opposition. An examination of the statements they did send out in many cases shows, in the first place, that they dealt with only one side of a proposition, that in many instances they misstated the facts, and in many instances misstated the law."

Senator Kenyon also stated that when Emery appeared before members of the senate committee in opposition to the Keating-Owen bill, he (Emery) insisted that he was there for conservation.

"But when pinned down in the evidence," said Senator Kenyon, "it was admitted that he represented 26 directors, and it never had been submitted to this general association. But senators who are receiving the pamphlet now being sent out against this bill, signed by Mr. Emery, as the National Council for Industrial Defense, and Mr. Kirby, as chairman, have no right to take up the consideration of the lobby and find out the relationship of this gentleman to what has gone on in the past."

WHAT THE UNIONS HAVE DONE.

Hannibal, Mo., March 4.—In an address at the dedicatory ceremonies of the new Typographical Union home in this city, President Wood of the state federation of labor said:

"Organized labor has cleaned out thousands of sweat shops, made sanitary thousands of factories where men live and work in. They have lessened the fatality and bettered the condition of labor. They have lessened the number of child laborers, and other various reforms too numerous to mention. Mr. Gompers was the official who appointed the head of the lives of thousands of men. The factory inspection law in almost every state in the union is due to labor, as is much toward bettering conditions in the factories and shops of the states. Organized labor has done much toward conditions of the entire citizenship which comes under its influence. Bettered health, financially, physically and intellectually. Where they used to work from 10 to 12 and 14 hours a day, they now work eight and nine and that has made it possible for them to seek recreation, strives them time to develop their minds after work hours.

"We have done more than any institution of the land to better mankind because we have grappled with the situation as we have seen it—as it has confronted us."

COMPENSATION ACT WEAKENED.

Frankfort, Ky., March 4.—The state senate has amended the proposed workmen's compensation act and the friends of this legislation declare that as it now reads the measure is no effect or value. The blow which crippled the act strikes out the section which provides that the common defenses of contributory negligence, assumption of risk and fellow servant relation shall not be brought to bear against an employer who had decided not to accept the provisions of the act. Under the act as it now reads employers will not avail themselves of the compensation law because there is no inducement to do so. Advocates of compensation show that the damage has been done and it is likely that before the session is over if the section is not reinstated by the house.

At the last session of the state legislature a compensation law was passed only to be declared unconstitutional on the ground that it limited the amount of damages in case of death. The present opposition is but a continuation of this struggle conducted by trade unionists.

LABOR FORWARD FOR DULUTH.

Duluth, Minn., March 4.—Trade unionists in this city have perfected arrangements for a labor forward campaign. President Hall of the state federation of labor assisted in the preliminary plans. He said these movements present opportunities for educational work among the unorganized and made it possible to remove many misunderstandings regarding trade unionism.

LABOR PEACE.

Trenton, Mass., March 4.—A vigorous labor forward movement is developing good results. The retail clerks and teamsters have organized and many locals have been strengthened.

CHEMICAL WORKERS STRIKE.

Roosevelt, N. J., March 4.—Several hundred workers employed at the Nitrogen Products & Chemical company, American Agricultural Chemical company struck last week to enforce a nine-hour day and a wage increase. The workers have been paid 23 cents for a 10-hour day. A strike started at this plant a year ago last January. Strike guards fired on the workers, killing two and injuring five. The guards were found guilty and sentenced to short terms in prison. The cases are still pending.

BREWERY WORKERS GAIN.

Cincinnati, March 4.—The various unions of brewery workers in this city have secured agreements after numerous conferences with employers. A weekly increase for brewery laborers, brewery drivers, bottle drivers; better working conditions and a three years' contract are the terms secured. The period January 31 and the gains will date from that time.

Anti-Union Claims Refuted; High Cost of Living Can Be Met

Chicago, March 4.—President Perkins of the Cigarmakers' International union refutes the favorite anti-union arguments that trade unionism is based on the principles of monopoly and that it is useless for unions to raise wages, as these gains are overcome by increased living costs.

Professor Laughlin of the economic department of the University of Chicago is the latest to expound these fallacies, and he is answered as follows by Perkins, who is the present issue of the Cigarmakers' Official Journal:

"The professor robed in the academic insignia, with a diploma dazzling before his eyes, assumes sometimes as a matter of fact, sometimes argues based on surface indications. His conclusions are as unsubstantial as a cloud and unworthy of credence. In surveying the activities of trades unions he overlooks entirely the cost of living. Prof. J. Laurence Laughlin in an article on the 'Monopoly of Labor,' published in the May, 1915, magazine some time ago, displayed a degree of ignorance which is somewhat perplexing to the average wage earner.

"As a matter of cold fact," asks Prof. Laughlin, "how has the workingman fared with this method of raising wages in recent years? In the principal manufacturing and mechanical industries, leaving out salaried employes, in the ten years from 1897-1907 (according to the index number of the Bureau of Labor) wages had risen from 99.3 to 132.4, or 34 per cent, while retail prices for food had increased from 94.3 to 124.4, or 32.6 per cent. Thus, during the chasing power of wages fell 2.2 per cent during that period of unusual expansion of business. In short, the whole effect of the wage increase had been swept away by the rise in the cost of food usually consumed in the family budget."

"It is more than a presumption, which leads to the assertion of the futility of the trades union movement, to overcome the increase in the cost of living by higher wages and shorter hours. The statistics published by the federal government show a direct correlation between the earnings of union labor and non-union labor. The earnings per of women and children are also included in the total. Hence to draw a hard and fast line in reference to the increase in wages, as compared with the cost of living, which includes the earnings of women and children, is no practical value whatsoever. It is based on a line of reasoning devoid of common sense, intelligent comprehension and analysis.

"The trades union movement is not responsible for the low wages paid to non-union labor; it is not due to its activities that the wages paid to the unorganized are low and above with the increase in the cost of living. It has always contended that the increase in the average wage rate, compared with the cost of living, due to a general organization, is downward; gradually leading to a state of semi-pauperism and degradation. But, it has also contended that by organization on trades union lines, this tendency would be eliminated. That it has not fully succeeded, is not due to the principles underlying the trades union movement; on the contrary it is due to a lack of organization on a more extensive scale. A correct analysis of the value of the trades union movement in this particular direction can be obtained only by preparing a statistics of trades union wages as compared with the cost of living. All other methods are worthless for a fair and honest comparison.

"Prof. Laughlin then concludes as follows:

"After all the bad blood stirred up in some twenty years, what has union labor accomplished practically nothing toward making it better off relatively to-day? Obviously something is very far wrong with the principle on which they are operating. They have been trying an uphill road for decades only to find no advance in sight. Is it not time, finally, the principle of monopoly of labor be dismissed as a failure?"

"Prof. Laughlin failed to mention a single industry in which organized labor has ever been a monopoly. He has failed to sustain his sweeping charge with a single fact. Generalities without any basis are not convincing; neither are they of any value in a discussion of this character. Statements of this nature only tend to intensify the general confusion which predominates in the public mind.

"Organized labor has no monopoly. The majority of the workers are still unorganized. Of the female workers engaged in the industries, approximating over seven millions, less than one-half of a million are members of trades union. This dispenses with the necessity of any further elaboration. This single fact is sufficient to annihilate the phantom which from the fertile brain of a professor of economics, university."